Ethics in Progress (ISSN 2084-9257). Vol. 4 (2013). No. 1. 57-81

The Concept of the 'New Soviet Man' As a Eugenic Project: Eugenics in Soviet Russia after World War II

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1. Introduction

Modern bioethical reflection is mostly focused on dilemmas and challenges which closely relate to the development of biomedical sciences in early decades of the 20th century (Fukuyama 1992; Habermas 2003). Following Alfred North Whitehead, the safest general claim regarding the European ethical tradition is that it consists of a series of footnotes to past dilemmas. The case of liberal eugenics and genetic enhancement, which presently attract the attention of Habermas, Fukuyama and others, may be viewed as an undergoing philosophical task to understand human nature, its value and ability to change. In this manner, it is possible to ask whether technology-based interventions on human heredity were and remain limited to somatic and cognitive capabilities of human beings. This paper focuses on the Soviet eugenic programme and – by evoking its ambiguous character – on the question how can biological interventions be transformed in efficient tools of shaping human nature and its social character.

The history of the Russian and Soviet eugenic movement[1] covers a short period of time between late 19th century until the II World War and the abolition of genetics – as a "bourgeois science" in the Soviet Union. Despite its rather short outbreak, Russian and Soviet eugenicists were able to develop a unique understanding of how to better the human population. Outlawing genetics in Soviet Russia is – generally – perceived as the end of the history of Soviet eugenics movement (see: Krementsov 1996, 2011; Spektorowski 2004, and other). In this article, I wish to defended a thesis suggesting that – despite formally denying any affiliation to eugenics – the Stalinist effort to "breed a new, better man" was a vast eugenic programme, though lacking a regular institutional basis, similar to those of West European countries. By evoking the Lysenkoist paradigm of Soviet natural sciences – based upon neo-Lamarckian views on heredity and transmittability of certain characteristics and traits – I

[1] The division between tsarist and post-Revolution Soviet Russia is based solely on the *caesura* of the October Revolution. Though after the fall of absolutist monarchy the Russian state underwent severe transformations, lasting many years, I will address the post-Revolution state as 'Soviet Russia'.

will try to reconstruct the theoretical frame, in which different aspects of population policies (ranging from the judiciary system to medical research) may be understood in terms of a eugenic project. In order to broaden the practical-historical perspective I shall refer to the Homo Sovieticus concept presenting it as an unpredictable but possible consequence of Soviet politics over life and heredity.

2. Eugenics History in Russia and the Soviet Union

The history of eugenics in Russia may be divided into three general stages. During the imperial era of the reign of the tsars, eugenic ideas did not achieve to root themselves on Russian soil, due to several factors. General economical and social status of the Russian Empire prevented eugenicists from gaining adequate support, as stated by Nikolai Krementsov:

> The Russian empire lacked the socioeconomic conditions – from urbanization to declining fertility, and from immigration to overpopulation – that fueled such interest elsewhere. The huge, sparsely populated, predominately agrarian, autocratic, poly-confessional, and multi-ethnic empire provided neither sufficient data nor receptive audience for eugenic concerns (Krementsov 2010, 414).

Inherent cultural, social, and economical differencies between the Russian empire and Western Europe explain why concepts of biological and racial improvement of a society couldn't assume a defensible position until the dawn of industrialisation in Russia. It is possible to assume that – in general – the differences evoked above inspired Nikolai Berdyaev to write that: "The Russian people in their spiritual make-up are an Eastern people. Russia is the Christian East, which was for two centuries subject to the powerful influences of the West, and whose cultured classes assimilated every Western idea." (Berdiaev 1960, 7). The notions of Christianity and assimilating Western ideas will be developed and analysed further.

Though initially unappreciated, eugenics did manage to acquire interest and develop gradually from the beginning of the 1900's, in accordance with the general, technical and social opening towards Western industries. Along with economical and technical development, the Russian empire acknowledged and embraced eugenic notions, however remaining cautious and critically independent towards the Western practices. Krementsov assumes that although Russian/Soviet biologists and physicians showed great interest in the eugenic concepts being imported from Western Europe and, at the same time, they remained sceptical towards many eugenic practices, notably the notions of 'races' and 'negative' eugenic measures, keenly implemented in national legal systems in North American and Western European countries: "They [i.e. Russian or Soviet proponents of eugenics]

largely rejected «negative measures» (be it sterilization or segregation) promoted by U.S., German, and Scandinavian eugenicists as a means of remedying such 'social diseases' as alcoholism, TB, prostitution, and crime, advocating instead the improvement of social conditions, re-education, and prophylactic medicine." (Krementsov 2011, 65–66). The humanistic and pro-living attitude, presented by Russian eugenicists, was coined with affirming that social and biological quality of living has an impact on individual development – and thus should be perceived as one of the fields of interest when thinking of perfecting the 'biological capital' of nations and societies: "Many placed strong emphasis on environment/education/nurture." (Krementsov 2010, 414).

The Bolshevik revolution did not have initially a limiting impact on eugenic movement but could facilitate its institutionalisation. "In the years prior to the Bolshevik Revolution of October 1917, eugenics failed to spark an organised movement or find an institutional setting. The situation changed dramatically after the revolution. Despite a bloody civil war (…) in the course of a few years eugenics boasted a nationwide society, research institutions, and specialised periodicals," as Krementsov (2010, 416–417) assumes. The now-institutionalised eugenic movement managed to play an important and influential role in early Soviet education: eugenic courses have been included in academic curriculum. The newly developed Institute of Experimental Biology, led by Nikolai Kol'tsov, succeeded in ensuring state funding from the People's Commissariat for Public Health – Narkomzdrav (Krementsov 2010, Spektorowski 2004). Reasons, that led Bolsheviks to support the eugenic movement – both financially and institutionally – may be uncovered when observing main themes of both the eugenic movement and the Bolshevik party. As observed by Krementsov (2010),

> Eugenic ideas of «bettering humankind» resonated strongly with the Bolsheviks' early visions of the country's (and ultimately the world's) future (…). Like eugenicists, the Bolsheviks believed in social progress and the ability of humans to direct it (cf. 424).

A common vision of the future based on the concept of centrally driven development (either in the economical or anthropological sense) justified Bolsheviks' favorable stance towards eugenics. Yet, along with Joseph Stalin becoming the central figure of Bolsheviks' politics and administration, the climate towards eugenic ideas started to change.

The flourishing era of Russian eugenics lasted from the Bolshevik revolution in 1917 until the 1930's. It is then, when Joseph Stalin began to consolidate his power, that the eugenic movement, along with other branches of science, became object of continuous limitations due to centralisation of sciences and their subordination to Marxist-Leninist ideology. Still, Russians eugenicists managed to preserve minimum space to condone their research.

Adapting to the new, political order of dictatorship, Soviet geneticists and eugenicists employed numerous strategies in order to obtain sufficient governmental support (and thus funding) for their projects:

"In the course of this explosive institutional growth, geneticists, like other Soviet scientists, employed the usual rhetorical tactics to legitimate their research in the eyes of state officials. They fought for «Marxist» genetics against «bourgeois» or «racist» perversions. They struggled against «Lamarckism» and for «Darwinism.» They promised that discovering the secrets of heredity would lead to grandiose practical results in medicine, in agriculture, and even in the creation of a new socialist society." (Krementsov 1996, 56).

In the years following the submission of science to political agendas, Soviet eugenic movement struggled to preserve at least some of its – now passing – positive reception in the Bolshevik circles. The "Great Break" along with the 'Five-year Plan' have "greatly diminished the autonomy and authority enjoyed by the scientific community in the 1920's," and have inevitably "led to the rapid «Stalinization» of Soviet science." (Krementsov 2010, 422). The final and deadly impact on Russian eugenics movement had the beginning of the Great Terror along with the anti-fascist propaganda that coined the word 'eugenics' with racial extermination and "fascist views on human genetics."

3. Specificity of Russian Eugenics

It is important to note that – thorough its history – the eugenic ideas in Russia remained highly attached to local, national influences, which proved to play an important role in forming RSFSR-specific eugenic demands and practices. Krementsov (2010) advocates such a view: "Soviet eugenics did not simply follow the paths of its Western counterparts. It was profoundly shaped by local traditions and institutional and ideological landscapes." (cf., 417). Hereafter I will attempt in explaining the general specificity of Russian eugenics – be it imperial or Soviet.

As mentioned earlier, Russian proponents of eugenics, although profiting from works of Western eugenicists such as Charles Davenport, Karl Pearson, Charles Richet, and others, remained clearly critical towards 'negative methods' of eugenics. Discharging any form of negative eugenics may be seen as a key feature of Russian eugenics. This distinguishing feature corresponds with Berdyaev's (1960) observation: "Solovëv said that the Russian intelligentsia professed a faith based upon the strange syllogism: Man is descended from a monkey, therefore we ought to love one another." (cf., 21). The suggested conjunction of Darwinian evolution theory and Christian charity may help understand and explain, why did Russian eugenicists support positive methods of eugenics.

To understand fully the specificity of Russian thinking on eugenics, it is noteworthy to admit, that – in opposition to Western Europe's national states, developed since the twilight of the Enlightenment era – Russia remained a multi-ethnic and poly-confessional state. Due to notions of tolerance and peaceful coexistence, the concept of a dominant race, developed by eugenicists across Europe, did not find much attention in Russia. In fact, such concept evoked sharp criticism. After the First International Eugenics Congress in London Isaac Shklovski wrote: "All those, purportedly scientific, data, upon which the doctrine of higher and lower races are based, cannot withstand criticism, for the very simple reason that anthropology knows of no pure race" (Krementsov 2010, 415). Such rejection remained an extraordinary feature of Russian eugenics against its Western proponents.

It should be emphasised that – apart from cultural diversities – the Russian society in the 1920's could be also described by an alarming demography. As noted earlier, imperial Russia lacked the demographic conditions that launched eugenic policies in Western Europe. Hundreds of thousands of casualties of the Great War and then the Bolshevik revolution aggravated Russia's demographic situation. Thus, it becomes evident why concepts of re-education and prophylactic medicine gathered more attention than negative methods, which demanded sorting out "unworthy" individuals.

A pre-Soviet as well as a Soviet projects of eugenics strongly emphasise environmental, nurture -, and educational aspects of strategies of bettering humankind. They display similarities to the French concept of puériculture2. What distinguishes the Russian trend of eugenics from the European is the fundamental belief in importance of environmental factors in both individual prenatal development and postnatal upbringing. This trend remains particularly important, as it marks on one hand a difference between Western and Russian eugenics, and on the other hand, it became one of the main axis of criticism, displayed by Marxist-Leninist biologists towards eugenics in the 1930's.

In his description of pre-Soviet Russian eugenics Krementsov refers to professor Isaak Orshanskii's report whose author has "prompted the congress [on public education] to issue a special «resolution on the struggle against criminality, suicide, defectiveness, and degeneration among children,» calling for founding specialised schools for the education of «defective children»." (Krementsov 2010, 415–416). The belief that "feeble-minded" or in other way "defective" children may be successfully re-educated proves to be one of the major themes in Russian/Soviet eugenics. Moreover, it implicitly supports the Lamarckian thesis that individually acquired traits and characteristics are

[2] Such a concept, aimed at providing parents and future parents with both sufficient information and practical counselling on contraceptives, hereditary diseases and general methods of efficient procreation, is still active (e.g. France, Belgium, the Netherlands) in forms of family counselling and *planning familial.*

subject of inheritance – and thus are one of the mechanisms of inter-generational assimilation to changing natural conditions. Remarking that it is possible to re-socialise these individuals, that presented unwanted traits and characteristics (such as tuberculosis, different types of mental disabilities, alcoholism etc.) assumes that – even though they once were classified as living lives "unworthy of living" – it is possible to change their nature in such a manner, that their offspring will not only not inherit unwanted traits, but will actually inherit those, which are perceived as worthy.

4. Establishing Lysenkoism

The Lamarckian concept on passing acquired traits from parents to children became – ironically – one of the main lines of critique, addressed by the Marxist-Leninist scientific community towards proponents of eugenics. Officially, Russian eugenicists, as well as Western biologists, approved the theory of inheritance developed by Gregor Mendel and further elaborated by August Weismann, based on the notion of "the continuity of the germ-plasm (…) claiming that genes maintain their integrity and do not become altered by blending." (Spektorowski 2004, 88). Suggesting that acquired traits are not subject to inheritance couldn't be supported by the Russian, forcedly-communist, scientific community, as it would have undermined the Marxist dogma that "human beings are the result of conditions and upbringing." (Krementsov 2011, 78).

Change of attitude towards eugenics coincided with severe changes to climate around Russian science and the scientific community. Launched by Stalin centralisation and politicisation of different dimensions of public and social life did also influence natural sciences, subjecting them to Marxist-Leninist ideology. It is possible to assume that outlawing genetics (and thus eugenics) by the Bolsheviks in late 1930's had been – even though probably unconsciously – initiated during preparations of the first Five-Year Plan:

> The background to Lysenko's meteoric rise in Soviet biology was the grand policy of state-supported science and technology introduced with the first five-year plan, which was intended to run from 1928-1932. Soviet Russia was the first country in the world to introduce a purposeful and generously funded state policy for scientific and technological development (Roll-Hansen 2005, 143).

In fact, it is possible to trace the genesis of the Stalinization of Russian science as far as 1929, when the "Great Break" in Soviet Russia was announced. "The year 1929 marked a dramatic change in all aspects of the country's life. The Bolsheviks launched a grandiose plan of rapid industrialization in order to build the «material-economic basis of socialism.» NEP was abolished, private initiative and the market were suppressed, the peasantry was collectivized,

and the state established a total monopoly over resources and production. This economic policy led to a system of strict control and administrative fiat." (Krementsov 1996, 31). In his thorough work on the condition of science during the Stalinist era, Krementsov concludes Stalin's efforts in extending party-driven control over Soviet science. The final consequence was the creation of a monolithic, hierarchical and isolated system, based on both the scientific community and public administration:

> By the end of the 1930's, the Stalinist system of science was established. A huge, centralized, hierarchical institutional structure had been created; the Soviet scientific community had been politicized and effectively isolated from its Western counterparts; and the party apparatus had established strict control over the institutions, personnel, communications, and research directions of Soviet science (Krementsov 1996, 54).

The occurring changes impacted both the organisation of Soviet science and its – now politically and ideologically correct – aims and goals. Those had to meet severe requirements: Firstly, and obviously, any scientific project developed in Soviet Russia during Stalin's reign had to be both theoretically (i.e. in the matter of pre-trial assumptions and references) and practically (i.e. concerning daily, empirical implementations) coherent with Marxist-Leninist ideology. This ideological rule had a severely negative impact on Soviet Russia's innovation and, moreover, often served as a pretext for legal trials against those scientists, whose works did not meet Stalin's expectations.

Secondly, the Stalinization of sciences required a strictly utilitarian and pragmatic attitude. Programme of accelerating the industrialisation of USSR, launched in the 1930's, required that the scientific community participated in the national effort of building a new, better future. This practical orientation of biological sciences has been evoked multiple times, especially by Trofim Lysenko, Soviet biologist, agronomist, and influential figure of Soviet science in the 1940's:

> Darwinism has not only been purified of its deficiencies and errors and raised to a higher level, but – in a number of its principles – has undergone a considerable change. From a science which primarily explains the past history of the organic world, it is becoming a creative, effective means of systematically mastering living nature, making it serve practical requirements (Lysenko 1950a, 37).

The new orientation of Soviet biology – concerning altogether plant and animal life – had been developed in accordance with a Marxist-Leninist perspective, promoting research having a practical application.

5. Lysenkoism as a Scientific Paradigm

The theoretical frame of the new Soviet biology and heredity science, instigated by the Bolsheviks and Joseph Stalin, concentrated on several important issues, distinguishing it severely from its Western counterparts. It was developed throughout the 1940's, becoming the official ideology of biological science with the emergence of Lysenko as the director of the Institute of Genetics within USSR's Academy of Science. The main objection raised constantly by Lysenko and aimed at Western "bourgeois" scientists as well as the Russian proponents of Darwinian genetics and eugenicists – concentrated on the notion whether acquired traits (changes in the *soma*) are hereditary or not. Following the path of Jean-Baptiste Lamarcke, Lysenko contributed to developing "a creative Darwinism which poses and solves problems of the theory of evolution in a new way." (Lysenko 1950a, 37). Re-orienting Soviet genetic to Lamarckian principles was not out of Marxist-Leninist context. Firstly, the Marxist-Leninist interpretation of Marx' post-metaphysical philosophy discredited any type of reasoning, which would not be rooted in empirical studies. Darwin's theory of heredity was accused of consisting "aspects that appeared idealistic, which suggested therapeutic impotence, or provided no basis for action." (Spektorowski 2004, 102). The postulated by Western geneticists (deriving from theories of August Weismann) separation of somatic and gametic cells established on the one hand the concept of "an immortal hereditary substance, independent of the qualitative features attending the development of the living body, directing the mortal body, but not produced by the latter," which was then described as a "frankly idealistic, essentially mystical conception" (Lysenko 1950a, 10). On the other hand, such differentiation between somatic body and gametic genome instigated conclusions – since only the former was subject to environmental stimulus and changes – that impaired the Marxist dogma that "neither legal relations nor political forms could be comprehended whether by themselves or on the basis of a so-called general development of the human mind, but that on the contrary they originate in the material conditions of life." (Marx 1977, 4). The constant demand to study and explain natural phenomena in a strictly materialistic paradigm demanded thus acknowledging the fact that environmental factors have impact on both social institutions and natural adaptation. Suggesting the existence of a third, unaffected by material conditions, dimension would have meant questioning the effective Marxist-Leninist ideology.

Lysenko was fully aware of the tensions described above – and understood that there is no place for Weismann- and Morgan-based genetics in Soviet Russia. Lysenko's rise in Soviet Russia coincided with growing tensions between the Soviets and the Nazi Germany – one of the major eugenics-based states in Europe. In these polarised conditions Lysenko became one of the main proponents of new, Lamarckian-based, genetics: "[He]

declared that for a Soviet scientist the only acceptable position was that of Michurinist biology, and that «bourgeois» Mendelism-Morganism-Weismannism should be banned from the practice of Soviet biologists. There was nothing surprising in Lysenko's declarations: he had been condemning «formal» genetics for nearly 15 years." (de Jong Lambert and Krementsov 2011, 374). The official institutionalisation of Michurinist-Lysenkoist biology and genetics may be identified with the positive reception and publication of Lysenko's keynote speech "The situation in biological science" given during a conference organised by the Lenin All-Union Academy of Agricultural Sciences (VASKhNIL) in Moscow in 1948. "In 1948 Stalin outlawed genetics as «bourgeois science» and «alien to the principles of socialism»." (McDaniel 2004, 870).

Lysenko not only defended a neo-Lamarckian view on genetics, which he presented as being fully coherent with Marxist-Leninist ideology – he also campaigned intensively towards "rooting out the Mendelian-Morganian-Weismanian mistake from Soviet science." Due to both official and unofficial support from The Central Committee of the Communist Party and – according to Lysenko's testimony – Joseph Stalin himself, Lysenkoism became the only official scientific method and ideology.

Lysenko developed several notions, basing on his interpretation of Lamarcke's theory of inheritance and Marxist-Leninist materialistic and revolutionist philosophy. Those led him to stating that it is not competition and rivalry among living beings that is one of the driving forces of natural selection. Surprisingly, a parallel statement may be traced in Marx's philosophy of economy and demographics. In one of his major works, Marx assessed that Darwin's theory of evolution contradicted the theory of Malthus, saying that – since natural resources are limited and the human population increases in a geometrical manner – rivalry between humans and social stratification are an inevitable consequence of a growing global population:

"In his splendid work *Darwin* did not realise that by discovering the «geometrical» progression in the animal and plant kingdom, he *overthrew* Malthus's theory. Malthus's theory is based on the fact that he set Wallace's geometrical progression of man against the chimerical «*arithmetical*» progression of animals and plants. In Darwin's work, for instance on the extinction of species, we also find (quite apart from his fundamental principle) the detailed refutation, based on natural history, of the Malthusian theory." (Marx 1968, 2: 121). This observation was further developed by Lysenko into dismissing any possible practical meaning of overpopulation as a factor of natural selection: "Within the botanical species and specimens the struggle for better natural conditions between individuals, if not direct, but indirect, is said to be sharper than between species, and it is argued that this phenomenon can be easily observed in nature. In fact, this phenomenon can not be observed in nature, because in general it does not exist at all." (Lysenko 1950b, 8). This

assumption was inevitably of ideological origin: it was impossible to maintain a theorem, that – if interpreted normatively – justified "a commonly occurring phenomenon in bourgeois societies, that vast majority of people, even though an overproduction of material goods, receives them in an amount insufficient to meet their needs" (Lysenko 1950b, 8).

One of Lysenko's original contributions to Michurin's theory of breeding was promoting the concept of obtaining – through grafting (hybridising) organisms – new specimens with a "shaken" nature. As explained by Lysenko: "Organisms with a «shaken» nature are those in which their conservatism has been eliminated, and their selectivity with regard to external conditions is weakened. Instead of conservative heredity, such plants preserve, or there appears in them, only a tendency to show some preference for certain conditions." (Lysenko 1950a, 30). The weakening of natural preferences towards certain environmental conditions as an – often inevitable – consequence of grafting or hybridising species is important when taking into account how investigations and "criminal" hearings of the Soviet security apparatus are being perceived and described. This notion shall be further elaborated in the final paragraphs of this work.

As stated earlier, Lysenko defended the concept suggesting that acquired throughout the lifespan somatic characteristics may be inherited. This observation led him to formulate a general principle of bettering specimens of plants and animals, which he identified as one of the major goals of breeding:

> Good strains of plants or breeds of animals are always produced by the application of proper methods of cultivation or breeding. No good strains can ever be produced by poor methods of cultivation, and in many cases even good strains will deteriorate under such conditions after a few generations. (...) Under poor cultivation all the seeds obtained are poor, and the best among them are still poor (Lysenko 1950a, 29).

The perfectionist attitude, presented and developed by Lysenko, was deeply rooted in the communist ideology and Marxist-Leninist philosophy. The new Soviet order demanded not only to concentrate on applicable science with definite link to practical issues, but also promoted an often overwhelming attitude to bring up a new, better man. One of the objectives of the "new Soviet man" project was to master nature in all its possible aspects – including breeding and inheritance – in order to reshape them in the utmost perfect manner: "Through the machine, man in Socialist society will command nature in its entirety" (Trotsky 2005, 205). The metaphorical marriage of human and machine, evoked by Trotsky, is not only a rhetorical figure. As observed by Slava Gerovitch on the example of the participants of the Soviet space programme:

> Soviet cosmonauts were «designed» as part of a larger technological system; their height and weight were strictly regulated, and their actions were thoroughly programmed. Soviet space politics, one might say, was inscribed on the cosmonauts' bodies and minds, as they had to fit, both physically and mentally, into their spaceships (Gerovitch 2007, 136).

6. The 'New Soviet Man'

The concept of the 'new Soviet man' was not born with the introduction of the Bolshevik government in Russia; in fact, the concept of creating (producing) a new, better type of men was widely popular in Europe, it's roots dated as far as the 2nd half of the 19th century. As summarised by Peter Fritzsche and Jochen Hellbeck (2009): "At the turn of the twentieth century, it was technological and scientific advancement, rather than revolutionary virtue, that invigorated the construction projects of collective subjectivity. Engineers, scientists, as well as intellectuals assembled an array of efficient and eugenic bodies designed to overcome degenerative cycles of history." (304). Soviet Russia was – for different reasons – a fertile ground for developing numerous projects and conceptions of who should the new man be, and how could he be attained. It worth noting that the linking between the idea of a 'new better man' and nature in Russian thought has been strong since the beginning of fashioning such projects. "Where the idea of the New Man continued to flourish was on the perceived margins of Europe, in Russia, where the notion of fashioning new beings out of nature acquired more and more urgency," Fritzsche and Hellbeck (2009, 305) assume. The origin of the Soviet concept of the 'new man' may be retraced in the works of Marx, Lenin, Trotsky, and several other communist thinkers. It is, however, the Russian writer and literary man Maxim Gorky, whose works served as the basis for the Stalinist role-model of the 'new Soviet man':

> It was the writer Maxim Gorky who more than any other individual thinker contributed to the contours and the meaning of the Stalinist New Man. (...) [He] endowed the New Man with two traits: Heroism and collectivism. Every individual (...) had an inborn fullness of life, strength, and beauty (Fritzsche and Hellbeck 2009, 308).

The suggested innateness of the mentioned qualities is, in fact, supports the naturalistic dimension of the new Soviet man project: Since acquired traits and qualities are intergenerationally transmittable, and these are of both physiologic and psychological nature, with further confirmation of the moulding impact of stimuli coming from the environment, it is possible to believe that employing different measures of biological and psychological control over the population by the Soviet state was an eugenic attempt.

The view that Soviet people are obliged to master nature both in themselves and in the environment, expressed as early as in the 1920's by Leon Trotsky, aimed at showing that even human bodily and psychic constitution are to be subject to such mastering and bettering:

> Man at last will begin to harmonize himself in earnest. He will make it his business to achieve beauty by giving the movement of his own limbs the utmost precision, purposefulness and economy in his work, his walk and his play. He will try to master first the semiconscious and then the subconscious processes in his own organism (...) and, within necessary limits, he will try to subordinate them to the control of reason and will. (...) Man will make it his purpose to master his own feelings, to raise his instincts to the heights of consciousness, to make them transparent, to extend the wires of his will into hidden recesses, and thereby to raise himself to a new plane, to create a higher social biologic type, or, if you please, a superman (Trotsky 2005, 206–207).

Compelling human nature in its entirety to man's will and reason resonates with Lysenko slogan, drawn from the works of Michurin (1950c): "We must not wait for favours from Nature: Our task is to wrest them from her." (4). The prominent Soviet biologist and agriculturalist full-heartedly agreed with Michurin's (1950d) motto, tying it closely with practical implications of his research: "Understanding the laws governing relationships between organisms and their surrounding environment is a fundamental of agrobiology. Also, the issue was and still is very important for the sake of practice. The better we understand the relationship between organisms and environmental conditions, the better we can adjust and create the right natural conditions and thus better manage the life of said organisms."

Gaining control in order to discharge the full potential of the Homo sapiens was one of the major elements of the Soviet ideology, promoting – along with the idea of communist revolution – the project of a new Soviet man. The concept of a better man stressed not only the need for new civic and social virtues, but also demanded certain bettering in the biological dimension of the human nature, as well as expanding control over ones surrounding until it would match the exact degree of control one would have over her- or himself. During the 22nd Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, it has been stated that the new Soviet man should be characterised by "a harmonic combination of rich spirituality, moral purity, and physical perfection." (Gerovitch 2007, 135). This observation is significant, as it proves that the indissoluble connection between individual and its environment applies not only to floral and animal species, but also to human. Thus, the Lysenkoist theory of natural sciences, promoting an environment-conscious perspective of explaining natural phenomena, may be described as an universal paradigm of Soviet biology, applying to all types and living specimens equally. This

notion may have an impact difficult to overestimate, as it may impair the well-grounded notion in the history of sciences, saying that after 1945 in Soviet Russia there had been no attempts to develop eugenic projects.

The perspective neglecting the existence of eugenic projects in Soviet Russia after World War II is less evident, when taking into account what was said earlier. Further, it is worthwhile to evoke a certain passage, attributed to Lysenko. The Soviet prominent of sciences is believed to have said that: "In our Soviet Union people are not born. What are born are organisms. We turn them into people-tractor drivers, engine drivers, academicians, scholars and so forth." (Heller 1988, 8). Such a powerful impact on an individuals characteristic, identified by Lysenko with environmental, body- and soul-shaping stimuli, may suggest that – even though scientifically unproven – the Bolshevik concept of the new Soviet man was in fact an eugenic project, developed on a empire-wide scale through different means of biological and social influences.

7. 'New Soviet Man' As a Eugenics Project

There may be specified several different fields, on which the eugenic affiliation of the project of the new Soviet man could be substantiated. In general, these can be of either theoretical or practical inclination. The theoretical basis, supporting the general assumption as noted above, emphasises the neo-Lamarckian orientation of Soviet genetics, along with its additional, Marxist-based concepts and arguments. The practical implications may be found on different levels, ranging from scientific and pseudo-scientific experiments, through the vast system of Soviet forced labour camps – GULag, up to the general policies on demographic and educational issues.

The ideological paradigm, in which Soviet science – and biology in particular – had been developed during Stalin's dictatorship, has been described in general terms in previous paragraphs. In order to show the manner how a Soviet-specific eugenic programme may be reconstructed upon the Lysenkoist paradigm in life sciences, its main characteristics and theorems must be recalled. Firstly, it should be noted that the vision of heredity, elaborated by Lysenko does not exclude eugenics out of scope of natural sciences. It does, however, stress out different methods and tools of controlling which traits and attributes are being inherited by subsequent generations than those appointed by European and American eugenicists in early 20th century. Unlike Charles Davenport or Charles Richet, who supported their eugenics programmes on statistical and quantitative bases[3], and thus employed mostly means of regulating reproduction through marriage and birth control,

[3] As for Davenport, he insists that: "We [i.e. eugenicists] can command respect for our eugenic conclusions only as our findings are based on rigid proof, a proof that is either statistical or experimental" (Davenport 1921, 391).

sterilisation of "feeble minded" and other – so called "negative" – measures, Russian and (supposedly) Soviet eugenics stressed out the usefulness of both "positive" and "negative" tools of eugenics. The Lysenkoist paradigm opened a wide field of influence through admitting the hereditary quality of acquired traits. Insisting that

> the organism and the conditions required for its life are an inseparable unity. (...) Changes in the conditions of life bring about changes in the type of development of vegetable organisms. A changed type of development is thus the primary cause of changes in heredity. All organisms which cannot change in accordance with the changed conditions of life do not survive, leave no progeny (Lysenko 1950a, 26–28).

This indicates that – at least in Lysenko's opinion – it is possible to obtain desirable specimens with certain traits and characteristics through strict control of environmental conditions. Thus, the main angle of Soviet eugenic methods would be to introduce such environmental conditions (be them biological, social or cultural)[4] that would have impact on human beings in such a way that their innate physical and mental features develop in a planned way. Taking into account different practical applications of the Lysenkoist theoretical frame in genetics and heredity science one has to ask how these exemplary cases match the theoretical and ideological frame of Lysenkoism as the only paradigm of Soviet science.

8. Human-Ape Hybrid

One of the most spectacular Soviet attempts to obtain empirical knowledge on laws governing species heredity, that also may be explained in terms of Michurin-based eugenics, is the so-called "project of hybridizing humans and apes by means of artificial insemination" (Etkind 2008, 206) introduced in the 1920's. The bizarre and futuristic concept has been developed by Ilya Ivanovich Ivanov, a Russian specialist in artificial insemination and interspecies hybridisation. Aside from project's feasibility, it is important to stress out some important notions concerning the project and its justifications, which may prove its connection to a eugenics-like effort. As Alexander Etkind observes, there may be different ways of reasoning, justifying why did the Bolshevik government decided to fund Ivanov's project. In sum, "Hybridization, should it be successful, would pave the way to the New

[4] Suggesting that not only biological traits are subject to laws of heredity is – in general – one of the main suppositions of the eugenics movements of the first half of the 20th century. The term "feeble-minded" has been used to describe "persons who may be capable of earning a living under favourable circumstances, but are incapable from mental defect, existing from birth or from an early age: (1) of competing on equal terms with their normal fellows, or (2) of managing themselves and their affairs with ordinary prudence" (Bartley 2000, 121).

Socialist Man whose ‘construction by scientific means’ was the official purpose of the Bolsheviks” (Etkind 2008, 205). The 'new Soviet man' idea is important here; Etkind precisely identifies the possible link between the scandalous project of hybridising apes and man on the one hand, and the biological and technical conditions for creating a new better man who fits to the new political order. The project found its advocates among the Bolshevik elite, in particular in Anatolii Lunacharsky and Lev Kamenev, both intellectually and ideologically closed to Trotsky. “Anatolii Lunacharsky (Commissar of the Enlightenment) and Lev Kamenev (member of Politburo, deputy head of the Soviet of Commissars) signed the papers. Like Schmidt, they belonged to the intellectual and futuristic wing of the government, which was precariously led by Lev Trotsky,” (as Etkind 2008, 206) puts it.

Out of different justifications, which could help understand the motives behind Bolsheviks financial and logistic support for Ivanov's project, Etkind points to one that has deep significance over the 'new Soviet an' as a eugenics project:

> The transformationist reading of Ivanov’s affair is the most satisfactory. The New Soviet Man was to be shaped by methods of positive eugenics, artificial insemination, and state-organized psychological transformation. Hybridization with apes was just an extreme point of the same program. Other projects of the Bolsheviks, such as the collectivization of agriculture, the resettlement of the urban population into communal apartments, or the removal of a large part of the labour force into the GULAG, were actually realized. As instruments for the improvement of humanity, however, they were no more effective than Ivanov’s project (Etkind, cf., 208).

Etkind's observation seems to be an over-interpretation – yet it seems that, when taking into account how the Soviet eugenics movement was evolving in the 1920's, such experiment could have attracted certain attention of Russian eugenicists. Etkind points, in fact, to two main figures of that movement, Nikolai Kol'tsov and Aleksandr Serebrovsky who are said to be interested in Ivanov's works. Serebrovsky actually went as far as to believe in “the future destruction of the bourgeois institution of the family,” which could be accelerated “due to methods of artificial insemination” (Etkind 2008, 208). Furthermore, it is worth point out the fact that, when describing Michurin's works in the field of horticulture, Lysenko raised the notion of grafting plants, along with Michurin's original contribution to plant breeding: “I. V. Michurin not only recognised the possibility of producing vegetative hybrids, but elaborated the «mentor» method. This method consists in the following: by grafting scions (twigs) of old strains of fruit trees on the branches of a young strain, the latter acquires properties which it lacks, these properties being transmitted to it through the grafted twigs of the old strain.” (Lysenko 1950a, 30). Grafting plants – as described by Lysenko – is thus a method of creating

interspecies hybrids, which (supposedly) obtain traits of both it's ancestral species, and – even further – are capable of growing seeds, which preserve the characteristics of their cross-bred parent. Highlighting the connections between the attempts to create interspecies hybrids and the notion of the new Soviet man supports thus the hypothesis stating that the concept of the 'new Soviet man' was to be – and in fact became – a eugenics project.

9. GULag As a Eugenics Tool

Along with medical procedures and pseudo-scientific experiments, a less spectacular but much more dramatic example of how the Soviet apparatus inflicted a eugenics-like system of sociobiological control over its population may be evoked. The complex and vast network of compulsory labour camps, the so-called GULag, along with certain civic and political institutions (such as Soviet security forces Cheka and NKVD, the judiciary and penal system, and others) may be comprehended as a sophisticated system aimed at "reconstruction" and "rehabilitation" of Soviet citizens and moulding them into a new better society composed of the new Soviet men.

The Soviet system of forced labour camps, scarcely placed in the Russian taiga and Arctic Russia regions, has been subject to numerous sociological, philosophical analysis and literary reflections. Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn sacrificed his life's work to describing and understanding, what was the GULag system reason of existence and how did it influence those, who were subordinated to it. In his monumental work, *The Gulag Archipelago* Solzhenitsyn as a former inmate of GULag, writer, and human rights activist does not mention any eugenic strategies observed in the Gulag system. Despite this fact, one may easily reconstruct some narratives in Solyhenitsyn book which may point to the eugenic aims of GULag's function.

To begin with, it should be noted that – in opposition to Nazi concentration camps, which were officially and openly aimed at exterminating for eugenic reasons several different "races" not worthy of living – the Soviet system of compulsory labour camps was intended as a correctional and educational facility for those, who had been deemed 'enemies of the people' or state. "Gulag is the acronym for the Chief Administration of *Corrective* Labour Camps which supervised the larger part of this system," as Whomas Whitney explains (Solzhenitsyn 1975, 616). One of the official reasons for establishing the GULag system was thus to isolate and re-socialise citizens due to enable them of living in the Soviet system. This central reason was sentenced to imprisonment for different sub-reasons, ranging from small-scale thievery up to presenting anti-Soviet acts, attitudes, and convictions. Anne Applebaum explains that, in the course of history, the term GULag has broadened its meaning, covering not only the administration of compulsory labour camps or the system of these scattered throughout the whole Soviet Union "isles," but

also “the Soviet repressive system itself, the set of procedures that prisoners once called the «meat grinder»: Detention, prison, interrogations, transport in unheated cattle cars, compulsory labour, destruction of families, years spent in exile, precocious and unnecessary death.” (Applebaum 2003, xvi).

The name of Darwin is evoked several times in Solzhenitsyn's work on. As he points out, there existed a specific form of 'natural selection' throughout the Soviet society, best visible in politically and ideologically driven events:

> At the conclusion of the conference, a tribute to Comrade Stalin was called for. For three minutes, four minutes, five minutes, the «stormy applause, rising to an ovation», continued. But palms were getting sore and raised arms were already aching. (...) However, who would dare be the first to stop? (...) They couldn't stop now till they collapsed with heart attacks! (...) Insanity! (...) Then, after eleven minutes, the director of the paper factory assumed a businesslike expression and sat down in his seat. (...) To a man, everyone else stopped dead and sat down. They had been saved! (...) That, however, was how they discovered who the independent people were. And that was how they went about eliminating them. (...) Now that's what Darwin's natural selection is (Solzhenitsyn 1975, 69–70).

Obviously, the evoked concept of Darwinian selection is not a natural one, present in different societies throughout history. It is a very Soviet construct of “plucking the field” of unwanted and undesired individuals rather, based on their accordance with the idealistic concept of the 'new Soviet man.' Each time Solzhenitsyn evokes the term Darwinian selection he recalls different cases showing what types of people where prone to being arrested and put in trial for “counter-revolutionary activity, counter-revolutionary agitation, social origins, industrial sabotage” (Herling-Grudziński 1951, 158–159) and other – real or fabricated – reasons. This pseudo-Darwinian selection was – in fact – a constant expurgation, aimed at picking out of the Soviet society those individuals, who lacked either adaptability to changing social and economical conditions or have proven to be – or become – a threat. The adaptability issue may be understood in terms of certain social skills, comprehending – according to official declarations – *inter alia* the ability to melt in the course of history (which, according to Lenin, led inevitably to communism). This notion is linked to the Stalinist concept of the new Soviet man, as Fritzsche and Hellbeck (2009) claim.

> Only those [visions of the New Man] would later be amalgamated into Stalinist representations of ideal humanity which could present themselves as being historical in nature and in accordance with History's continued progression toward the Communist future. Reason – defined as an understanding of the course of history – and will (...) were two inalienable qualities of the new Soviet Man (cf., 309).

The 'historical' reason of the new Soviet man is such a quality that could have been successfully measured, or weighed, and could thus become the justification for imprisonment (e.g. witnessing a truckload of dead bodies should be ignored and never spoken of; acting differently – certainly telling the truth – was classified as "Anti-Soviet Agitation" and sentenced to ten years, as accounted by Solzhenitsyn). Imprisonment, in turn, contributed to the elimination of certain types of traits and qualities from the general heredity pool: "All organisms which cannot change in accordance with the changed conditions of life do not survive, leave no progeny" (Lysenko 1950a, 28).

Such selection and isolation may be referred to as a eugenic attempt over the Soviet population. The testimony of Andrey Zubov, Russian history and politics researcher, suggests that an awareness of eugenic tendencies in the 'new Soviet man' project actually existed. As cited by Sergei Gogin:

> [T]he 'Soviet man' evolved as a result of a deeply negative selection process, whereby «the best, most honest and most cultured people were either killed or prevented from having a family and raising children by exile or imprisonment. [In turn] the worst sort of people, namely those who took part in the creation of this new form of man or silently supported the new authorities, could be fruitful and multiply» (Gogin 2012, 13).

This observation is not only of anthropological, but also of biomedical importance. The widely approved opinion that psychological traits are genetically conditioned (and thus may be subject to inheritance), popular amongst Western eugenicists of the early 20th century may be evoked as a theoretical frame in this case.

10. Bettering Man through Hard Labour

Aside from the notion of selecting and isolating certain types of individuals, who presented traits undesired by the Bolshevik government, the Stalinist new Soviet man project have been also sought through positive measures. These may include a general politics of propaganda and a "personality cult," as well as the methods and aims of interrogations, trials and sentences of the GULag system.

The trial procedures, applied by Soviet prosecutors, were not only a tool used to obtain an admission of guilt from the accused. Sleep deprivation, hours of interrogation without the possibility to satisfy even most basic, physiological needs, and other measures, had a different goal – rendering one's mental constitution into a state of dissolution. Herling-Grudziński claims,

> The whole system of compulsory labour in Soviet Russia in all its stages, the interrogations, the preliminary imprisonment, and the camp itself is intended primarily not to punish the criminal but rather to exploit him economically and transform him

> psychologically. (...) The real object of a hearing is not the extortion from the accused of the prisoner's signature to a fictitious indictment, but the complete disintegration of his individual personality (cf., 65).

This methodical pressure, imposed on the "enemies of the Revolution," was introduced intentionally to weaken one's sense of stable identity and reduce her or him to a "shaken" or "wobbling" state. At this moment, it was possible not only to obtain the desired testimony (preferably revealing other possible "foes of the Soviet Union"), but also to begin the long-term and constant process of reshaping one's basic constitution and identity according to a chosen model[5]. This process of moulding a human being into a different person, through psychological and biological measures, may be understood in eugenic terms, when taking into account already recalled Lysenko's words:

> In our Soviet Union people are not born. What are born are organisms. We turn them into people-tractor drivers, engine drivers, academicians, scholars and so forth (Heller 1988, 8).

Introducing "positive" measures of eugenics – such as nurture and re-socialisation – have been evoked as a typically Russian position on "bettering the human race," which remained popular in the Soviet period.

Apart from intentional stimuli aimed at disintegrating and reshaping human intellectual and moral constitution, exerted intentionally during the interrogations and trials, the imprisonment itself had an enormous impact on people sentenced to spending dozens of years in the taiga. This impact exceeds simple, psychological and sociological changes in behaviour and everyday life strategies, reaching as far as the most simple and basic structures of one's identity. It is possible to argue that, referring to the former prisoners' recollections – such a dramatic change as that which took place while serving a sentence, was due to the strict and rigorous organisation of labour. Deprived of the possibility to make even the least important decisions concerning their life in prison, prisoners developed a sense of dependency on camp's administration order, decisions, and logics: "In jail and in the camps Shukhov had lost the habit of scheming how he was going to feed his family from day to day or year to year. The bosses did all his thinking for him, and that somehow made life easier. But what would it be like when he got out?." (Solzhenitsyn 1991, 34). It is possible to address this question, by stating that Solzhenitsyn's hero – when liberated from the camp – would be shaped as the Bolshevik government wanted him to be: Accustomed to hard labour and in desperate need for moral, intellectual and everyday life guidance, which the Bolshevik party would provide gladly. The 'new Shukhov' would become a perfectly re-

[5] For a broader explanation of how it is possible to disintegrate and reintegrate one's personal identity according to a chosen model using intentional measures, see Dąbrowski 1964.

socialised Soviet citizen; even though lacking intellectual and moral virtues of the new Soviet man, ex-prisoners would at least prove to be useful for the 'greater good' of History progressing to communism.

The accommodation to difficult and harsh environmental conditions as a tool of eugenics not only is in accordance with the Lysenkoist and neo-Lamarckian paradigm of inheriting acquired traits, but also – in light of recent discoveries in genetics and heredity science – may actually be a scientifically legitimate way of influencing certain physiological changes in future generations. According to Kevin V. Morris, a certain part of the human genome – the long non-coding RNA – may be permanently influenced and changed due to environmental impacts during the epigenetic phase of prenatal development, and – as the part of the human genome – may be transmitted to one's offspring, thus granting them qualities and traits obtained by their biological parents: "Epigenetic changes accrued over an organism's lifetime may leave a permanent heritable mark on the genome, through the help of long noncoding RNAs," as (Morris 2012) emphasises. Claiming that individual changes – effects of certain, external stimuli – may be subject of heredity supports thus the effectiveness of Soviet eugenic doings, and thus help explain the appearance such sociological fact as is the Homo Sovieticus.

The term Homo Sovieticus was created by Aleksandr Zinovyev, Russian logician and political dissident, in the early 1980's. The concept may be summarised as follows: "Homo Sovieticus is seen as a very ordinary, transparent, malleable and submissive human being with rather primitive desires and precious few exceptional feature." (Rogachevskii 2002, 975). This concept may be broadened by some remarks, given by Gogin (2012): "Homo Sovieticus believes that he is only a small cog in a larger government machine, and is a person who conflates the state with society and himself with the state" (cf., 12). Evoking the submissiveness of the Homo Sovieticus is not meaningless, as it leads us to Solzhenitsyn's remarks on how does the imprisonment affect human constitution. The term Homo Sovieticus is – in general – perceived as a sociological term, used to describe certain attitudes presented by ex-Soviet citizens, as well as their children. In this context Gogins' observation seems to be relevant: "[Y]oung people, who never lived in the USSR and have only learnt about it from old Soviet films and the stories of their parents and grandparents, can also hold a positive opinion of Russia's Soviet past due to such political propaganda and family stories" (cf., 15). The passing from generation to generation of certain traits, distinctive for Homo Sovieticus, is obviously due to nurture and political reality – but it nonetheless remains an intriguing phenomenon, even though since the collapse of the Soviet Union coordinated effort to promote the 'new Soviet man' through propaganda has ceased. So one may assume that Homo Sovieticus is an unwitting and – even further – somehow grotesque "offspring" of the Soviet eugenic programme.

11. Foucault and the Genealogy of Racism

What may seem as an overzealous reading and interpretation of both the theoretical frames of Soviet biological sciences and their – inseparable – possible practical applications, is in fact an observation that broadens the notion of Soviet racist state policy, developed by Michel Foucault. During his 1975-1976 lectures on society and biopolitics he introduces the term "racism" as an evolutionary struggle for biological existence. In effect, modern racism is born, when "the term of racial purity replaces that of race struggle" (Foucault 2003, 81). Connecting racism with the issue of a homogeneous and pure society thus links Foucault's concept of biopolitics with that of eugenics from the early decades of the 20th century. The passage to racism as biopower is described by Foucault as being an effect of constant processes, internal to society and politics:

> In place of the historical-political thematic of war, with its slaughters, victories, and defeats, enters the evolutionary-biological model of the struggle for life. According to Foucault, this «dynamic racism» (…) furnishes a technology that secures the function of killing under the conditions of biopower (Lemke 2011, 41).

Linking the new, modern racist politics with technology as the dominant discourse is not without significance, as it points directly to – prevalent in Soviet Russia – demand to promote and develop heavy industry as a mean of modernisation.

From his perspective of racism Foucault remains conscious not only of the Nazi programme of breeding a better Aryan humankind – but also discovers an analogous notion within the socio-political order and practices of the Soviet totalitarianism[6]:

> In contrast to the Nazi transformation, you have a Soviet-style transformation which consists in doing (…) just the opposite. (…) It does not use the dramaturgy of legends, and it is diffusely «scientific». It consists in reworking the revolutionary discourse of social struggles (…) and articulating it with the management and the policing that ensure the hygiene of an orderly society. In Soviet State racism, what revolutionary discourse designated as the class enemy becomes a sort of biological threat (Foucault 2003, 83).

What Foucault fails to notice is the positive aspect of the Soviet project of social control. Not only did the Soviet dictatorship eliminate (in a biological sense) "enemies of the people," such as *kulaks*, independent thinkers and many

[6] It should be noted that eugenics as an instrument of biopower was – as observed by Foucault – not specific only to totalitarian regimes, but was employed also by authoritarian and democratic regimes.

others thought to be a threat to the newly-installed regime, but they created a complex network of different practices aimed at re-socialising and correcting those people who could still be of use for society. As described earlier, those practices, ranging from scientific and pseudo-scientific experiments, through a sophisticated apparatus of propaganda and pseudo-education, to rehabilitation through the hard labour, even though lacking officially a common denominator, could be understood in terms of the eugenic project – particularly when taking into account the prevailing Lysenkoist paradigm in biomedical sciences. The problem of eugenics as a source and instrument of modern biopower is still far from being exhausted. Further research may prove to provide important insight into how the concept of biological living has been and still is being integrated into the dimension of politics. Giorgio Agamben's interpretation of this problem may – for instance – offer a relevant analytical tool for describing and explaining eugenic tendencies in the history of the Soviet regime in Russia.

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The Concept of the 'New Soviet Man' As a Eugenic Project: Eugenics in Soviet Russia after World War II

Abstract. This article penetrates the idealistic, Marxist concept of the 'new Soviet man', linking it with the notion of eugenics. Departing from a reconstruction of the history and specificity of the eugenic movement in Russia since the late 19th century until the installation of Joseph Stalin as the only ruler of the Soviet Union, Lysenkoism paradigm of Soviet natural sciences is being evoked as a theoretical frame for Soviet-specific eugenic programme. Through referring to a number of chosen – both theoretical (classic Marxist works) and practical (chosen aspects of Soviet science and internal politics) – issues and cases, the concept of the 'new Soviet man' is being confronted with an original reading of eugenics, understood in neo-Lamarckian terms of direct shaping human beings through environmental conditions (comprehending the GULag system of labour camps, pseudo-medical experiments and other) and intergenerational transfer (through inheritance) of acquired traits.

Keywords: eugenics, New Soviet Man, Lysenkoism, biopower.

Ethics in Progress (ISSN 2084-9257). Vol. 4 (2013). No. 1. 57-81.